

September 22, 2005

## **Support the Kind Amendment to H.R. 2123 Suspend Unprecedented Testing of Head Start Children**

Dear Colleague:

We join educators, parents, and Head Start staff across the country in supporting reauthorization of Head Start. We remain concerned, however, about continued implementation of the National Reporting System (NRS), an assessment instrument developed under HHS's guidance in 2003 and used to test half a million children in Head Start twice yearly.

HHS implemented the NRS – at the cost of \$25 million dollars so far - despite protests by early child education experts who question the validity, reliability, and appropriateness of the assessment. While we support ongoing assessments of Head Start children to help ensure their school readiness, these specific tests were developed behind closed doors and with very little input from child development experts, Congress, or Head Start Centers.

The GAO validates many of these concerns. In May, they released a report stating: “Based on our analysis and that of the Technical Working Group and independent experts, we continue to believe that further study is necessary to ensure that the NRS results are reliable and valid and the results are appropriate for the intended purposes.”

The Kind amendment will temporarily suspend the NRS while the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) conducts a study, as required in HR 2123, to report on appropriate standards and benchmarks for school readiness and valid measures of assessment. Until the NAS completes its review, it is critical that we suspend use of the National Reporting System.

Attached is a memo with background on the NRS and letters of support for the Kind amendment from leading child development and early education experts.

Head Start will be on the floor Thursday. We urge our colleagues to support the Kind Amendment. Should you have any questions, please contact Sherry Harper at 68129.

Sincerely,

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Committee Member Ron Kind

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Ranking Member George Miller